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# Canada's Cities

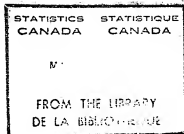


One of a series from the 1976 Census of Canada



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## Canada's Cities

One of a series from  
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## Introduction

Canada is a highly urbanized country with three-quarters of its population now living in urban centres. The proportion of the urban population increased from 37.5% in 1901 to 75.5% in 1976. The growing metropolitan areas have added to the urban phenomenon. Of the 17.4 million urban Canadians in 1976, 12.8 million lived in metropolitan areas.

Canada's largest urban settlements are in three main areas: Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. But more impressive is the distribution of the urban population along a heartland corridor from Windsor to Québec City. Almost 60% of Canada's total population lives along this 650-mile (1,046 km) east-west region.

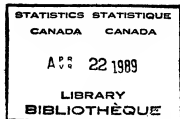
The doubling of the urban proportion of the population between 1901 and 1976 is set against a background of fast-moving changes. During the first quarter of this century wheat production was the principal stimulus to the Canadian economy. At the turn of the century wheat formed less than 5% of the total value of Canadian exports; by 1911 the value had increased to 16% and by the end of the First World War it was the single most important export commodity. During the same period Canada's manufacturing industries developed; stimulated by the rapidly growing railway network, they produced transportation equipment and iron and steel. The pulp and paper industry also grew rapidly in this period. By 1920, the manufacturing industries had overtaken agriculture in terms of value of output. Employment opportunities increased in the towns and cities, attracting people from the smaller towns and the rural areas. Although immigrants were channelled into the rural areas in the early 1900s, by 1921 over 50% of the foreign born resided in urban areas.

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Meanwhile, vital communication systems were being set up across the country. By 1917 over 38,000 miles of railway lines had been constructed. Telephones also provided communication links between large individual business organizations as well as between the urban and rural centres that supported them.

The arrival of the automobile further aided the urbanization process by enabling Canadians to travel longer distances to work. In 1910 only 9,000 motor vehicles were registered. By 1920 this figure had risen to 409,000 and by 1930 to 1,233,000. After the Second World War more and more people could afford to live outside the city core and commute to work. The growth of the suburbs was on its way.

Because of crowded cities, high crime rates, pollution and noise, some people feel that urban growth without careful planning may have gone too far. Canada's large metropolitan areas, however, are much smaller than the big urban agglomerations of the world: New York, 16.7 million; Mexico City, 11.9 million; Tokyo, 11.7 million; Shanghai, 10.8 million; and Paris, 9.9 million (United Nations Demographic Yearbook, 1977). Can we avoid the economic and social problems associated with big cities? Will our cities go the way of the large cities in the United States where many people are still abandoning the core for the suburbs?





# Urban Canada



Urban increase  
Rural decrease

In 1901 about one-third of all Canadians were living in urban areas. Throughout the following decades every census recorded an increase in the urban proportion of the population. And by 1976, three out of four Canadians were living in urban areas. The 1976 Census defined the urban population as persons living in an area having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of at least 1,000 per square mile (386 per square kilometre). The residual is defined as the rural population. Meanwhile, this century

has seen a steady decline in the proportion of persons living in rural areas, with the exception of the last five years when urban growth may have reached a plateau.

In absolute terms, the urban population grew from 2.0 million in 1901 to 17.4 million in 1976, for an increase of 770%. This was more than double the increase for the total population (328%). The rural population, however, increased by only 65% from 3.4 million to 5.6 million.

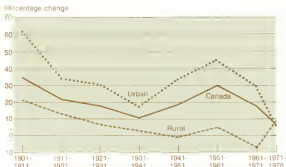
Urbanization —  
fast and slow

Since the beginning of this century, urban population growth rates have varied from decade to decade, paralleling total population patterns — but at consistently higher percentages of growth. One of the most rapid rates of urban growth, for example, occurred between 1901 and 1911 when the urban population increased by 62%, compared to 35% for the total population and only 21% for the rural population. The addition of persons to urban centres was spurred by the heavy influx of immigrants and extensive Western settlement. Further, manufacturing industries developed, especially in the urban centres of Central Canada, thus expanding urban job opportunities.

In contrast, the period 1931 to 1941 was marked by a dramatic slowdown in urban growth: the urban population increased by only 18%. The impact of the Great Depression was felt throughout Canada: rates of population growth and immigration were low, the demand for products of the manufacturing industries fell off and the rate of investment contributing to advancing technological change declined. These factors and many others combined to dampen the forces associated with urbanization.

Chart 11

### Intercensal Rate of Urban and Rural Population Growth, Canada, 1901-1976



Source 1901-1961 Stone, L.O., 1967 *Urban Development in Canada*, 1961 Census Monographs, Table 2.1  
 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-709, Table 11  
 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-807, Table 7

After 1941 urban growth increased rapidly. The demands of the Second World War stimulated the industrialization process by making greater use of Canada's resources and promoting technological change. Rapid urbanization continued into the postwar period when economic opportunities expanded along with the fast growth of the oil, natural gas, and automobile industries. Between the censuses of 1951 and 1961, the number of urban Canadians increased by 48% from 8.6 million to 12.7 million. Massive postwar immigration added to the concentration of people in urban areas. Meanwhile the accelerated spread of transport and communications enabled more people to live outside of the city centres and far from their work location.

Since 1961 there has been a marked drop in the rate of growth of both the total and urban populations. The ratio of the urban population to the total population has declined

from 76.1% in 1971 to 75.5% in 1976. At the same time the 1976 Census hints at a renewed interest in rural living. Since 1951 the rural population remained fairly stable, but in the five years from 1971 to 1976 it went up by nearly half a million for a gain of 8.8%, compared to a 5.9% increase in the urban population. Is Canada experiencing a rural renaissance? Crowded, noisy urban centres with their traffic problems and high-priced accommodation may be giving way to a growing desire, by many people, for the peace and quiet of the countryside. Also, more urban workers may be prepared to commute to work while opting to live in a rural area.

## Urban differences among the provinces

Ontario and Quebec are Canada's two most urbanized provinces with 81.2% and 79.1% of their respective populations living in urban areas. British Columbia and Alberta follow closely with urban populations of 76.9% and 75.0% respectively. Prince Edward Island, however, is the most rural with an urban population of only 37.1%. All other provinces have more than half of their populations residing in urban centres. Even the relatively small populations of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are over half urban.

Canada's provincial urban patterns result from the interaction of many factors, each

exerting a different impact on urban growth at different times. Natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration (which includes internal and external migration) combined with varying economic growth, technological changes in production and the development of communications and transportation have influenced the urban process to different degrees. Between 1951 and 1961, for example, natural increase was by far the most important factor influencing Quebec's urban growth. But for British Columbia, natural increase and net migration were of equal importance in contributing to urban growth.

Chart 2

Percentage of Population Living in Urban Areas by Canada and Provinces, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-807, Table 7

## The pattern of change 1971-1976

Between the censuses of 1971 and 1976 the urban population increased in every province. But the range of increases varied from 1.0% in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia to 15.0% in Alberta. The relatively smaller changes in Ontario (6.5%) and Quebec (2.9%) are not surprising since both of these provinces were already highly urbanized.

The gain in Ontario's urban residents accounted for nearly half of Canada's total urban population increase. Alberta had the second largest rise, followed by British Columbia and Quebec.



Table 1

Numerical and Percentage Change in the  
Urban Population, by Province,  
1971-1976

Province	1976 urban population	Change over 1971 Census	
		Number	Per cent
Nfld.	328,270	20,645	6.7
P.E.I.	43,880	440	1.0
N.S.	462,590	4,615	1.0
N.B.	354,420	8,460	2.4
Que.	4,932,755	137,815	2.9
Ont.	6,708,520	407,465	6.5
Man.	714,480	21,380	3.1
Sask.	511,330	22,925	4.7
Alta.	1,379,165	180,335	15.0
B.C.	1,897,085	156,540	9.0
Yukon	13,315	2,100	18.7
N.W.T.	21,165	4,335	25.8
Canada	17,367,000	967,050	5.9

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-807, Table 7.

Census urban  
size groups

The various urban size groups developed from Canada's census data show some important differences in the urban population. The largest urban size group (500,000 and over) accounted for 49.0% of the total urban population in 1976. Further, this group increased by

1.3 million persons between 1971 and 1976, for an increase of 18.6%. Three of the urban size groups actually experienced population declines during the five years, with the biggest decrease of 18.9% occurring in the 100,000 to 499,999 group.

Table 2

Distribution and Change of the Urban  
Population by Size Groups, Canada,  
1971 and 1976

Urban size groups	1971	1976	Difference	Percentage change
500,000 and over	7,177,540	8,515,085	1,337,545	18.6
100,000 to 499,999	3,907,590	3,170,220	-737,370	-18.9
30,000 to 99,999	1,542,860	1,824,325	281,465	18.2
10,000 to 29,999	1,574,505	1,642,315	67,810	4.3
5,000 to 9,999	750,625	730,155	-20,470	-2.7
2,500 to 4,999	701,845	763,010	61,165	8.7
1,000 to 2,499	744,955	721,875	-23,080	-3.1
Total	16,399,920	17,366,970	967,050	5.9

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-807, Table 7.

## Growth and urban boundaries

Increasing and decreasing urban size groups reflect demographic changes and boundary reclassification. Demographic changes result from natural increase and net migration. People tend to move to the larger urban complexes because of greater economic opportunities. The reclassification of rural-urban boundaries may occur if, for example, a rural area is growing rapidly; it therefore has a greater chance of being reclassified as urban

at the next census. As a result of the reclassification the entire population of the area becomes urban. The population loss, therefore, of one urban size group could be the gain of another. In fact, urban boundaries are redefined at each census to reflect the expansion of built-up areas, changes in administrative boundaries and any changes in the census concepts of what is metropolitan and urban.

# Metropolitan Canada



## Canada's census metropolitan areas

Many of the large cities emerged in the wake of advancing urbanization, especially since the Second World War. Rapid technological changes in production, transportation and communications, combined with continued economic expansion contributed to the growth and development of Canada's cities.

The 1931 Census defined 12 "Greater Cities of Canada". Each census year more were

added to keep pace with the many changes occurring within the larger urban centres (such as suburban growth and boundary changes). These Greater Cities were renamed Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) in 1951. By 1976 there were 23 CMAs and they embraced more than half of the Canadian population.

## What is a CMA?

Statistics Canada has defined a CMA as the main labour market area of an urbanized core (or continuous built-up area) having 100,000 or more population. The CMAs are usually referred to by the name of the largest city in that area. Oshawa in 1976 was the most recent urban centre to join the ranks of Canada's CMAs.

The CMAs are made up of two principal components: (a) the urbanized core, a continuous built-up area, subdivided into the central city and remainder of the urbanized core; and (b) the fringe, that is the remainder of the CMA which does not form part of the urbanized core.

## 12.8 million CMA residents

Canada's total CMA population was about 12.8 million in 1976: 6.1 million in the central cities; 5.7 million in the remaining parts of the urbanized cores; and 1.0 million in the fringe

areas. The CMAs range in population size from 113,000 (Saint John CMA) to 2.8 million (Toronto and Montréal CMAs). The average size of the CMAs was 556,471.

## Big and small CMAs

The population sizes of the 23 CMAs fall into four main groups. At the upper end are the "super-sized" CMAs with populations above one million: Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. The next group has population sizes between 400,000 and 700,000: Ottawa-Hull, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Québec, Hamilton and Calgary. The third group of CMAs is

in the 200,000 to 350,000 range: St. Catharines, Kitchener, London, Halifax, Windsor and Victoria. The smaller size CMAs with populations below 200,000 are Sudbury, Regina, St. John's, Oshawa, Saskatoon, Chicoutimi-Jonquière, Thunder Bay and Saint John.

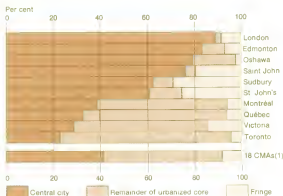
## Different patterns of distribution within CMAs

The population distributions within the CMAs for 1976 show many variations. Among those CMAs with a central city and adjacent areas, London has the highest proportion (88.9%) of people living in the central city, while Toronto has the lowest proportion (22.6%). Toronto, however, has 73.0% of its population living in the remainder part of the urbanized core

compared with only 2.3% for London. Sudbury's fringe CMA residents form the largest proportion (29.3%) relative to the other CMAs and Oshawa's the smallest proportion (2.3%) living in the fringe area. Whether a CMA has a fringe area or not is largely a result of the boundary definitions and annexation practices of the municipalities.

Chart 3

### Population Distribution Within Ten Selected CMAs, 1976



(1) Includes only those CMAs with largest city, remainder of urbanized core and fringe

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6

Table 3

Population of CMAs, Urbanized Core and Fringe  
with Components, 1976

	Urbanized core				Total CMA population
	Central city	Remainder	Fringe		
Toronto, Ont.	633,318	2,045,643	124,140		2,803,101
Montréal, Que.	1,080,546	1,550,343	171,596		2,802,485
Vancouver, B.C.	410,188	622,024	134,136		1,166,348
Ottawa-Hull					693,288
Ontario part	304,462	150,910	65,969		521,341
Quebec part		147,115	24,832		171,947
Winnipeg, Man.	560,874		17,343		578,217
Edmonton, Alta.	461,361	53,307	39,560		554,228
Québec, Que.	177,082	330,829	34,247		542,158
Hamilton, Ont.	312,003	167,707	49,661		529,371
Calgary, Alta.	469,917				469,917
St. Catharines-Niagara, Ont.	123,351	151,247	27,323		301,921
Kitchener, Ont.	131,870	119,006	21,282		272,158
London, Ont.	240,392	6,132	23,859		270,383
Halifax, N.S.	117,882	88,358	61,751		267,991
Windsor, Ont.	196,526	16,250	34,806		247,582
Victoria, B.C.	62,551	124,270	31,429		218,250
Sudbury, Ont.	97,604	13,413	46,013		157,030
Regina, Sask.	149,593		1,598		151,191
St. John's, Nfld.	86,576	20,103	36,711		143,390
Oshawa, Ont.	107,023	25,073	3,100		135,196
Saskatoon, Sask.	133,750				133,750
Chicoutimi-Jonquiére, Que.	57,737	57,182	13,724		128,643
Thunder Bay, Ont.	111,476		7,777		119,253
Saint John, N.B.	85,956	4,519	22,499		112,974
All CMAs	6,112,038	5,693,431	993,356		12,798,825

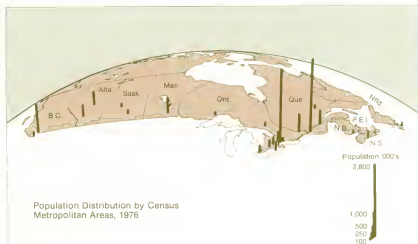
Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6.

### CMA distribution 1976

Distribution of the 23 CMAs throughout Canada is striking. The range is from Ontario, which has nine CMAs (10 including Ottawa-Hull) to Prince Edward Island, which has no CMAs. There are also no metropolitan areas in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. The most noticeable aspect, however, of CMA distribution is the 650-mile long corridor from Windsor to Québec City. Between these two points, there are 10 CMAs with 8.6 million

CMA residents. This concentration is not surprising since the corridor represents the line of earliest continuous settlement and includes the bulk of the nation's industrial production centres, most of the major financial institutions and a strong growth potential. In recent years, however, the Ontario government has adopted a policy of trying to move future Ontario growth further into the interior.

Chart 4



Source 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6  
Adapted from Perspective Canada III, Catalogue 11-511, 1980  
Produced by the Geocartographics Centre, 1979

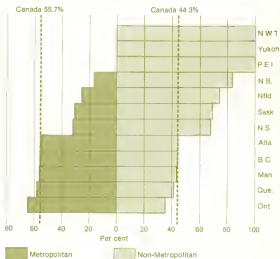
### Ontario — 65% metropolitan

Of those provinces with CMAs, New Brunswick has the smallest share of its population living in the metropolitan area. Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec have over half of their populations living

in CMAs, while almost two-thirds of Ontario's population is metropolitan. In fact, the distribution of the metropolitan population closely follows the size of the provincial populations.

Chart 5

Proportion of Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Population by Province, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806 Table 6.

### Slow and fast growing metropolitan areas

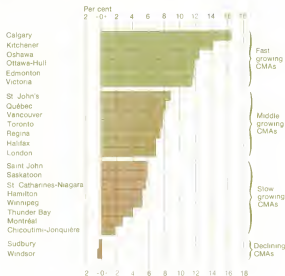
Between 1971 and 1976, the CMA population as a whole increased marginally faster than the total population, 6.8% compared to 6.6%. But this increase hides the considerable variations in growth between CMAs. Canada has six fast growing CMAs, seven medium and eight slow growing CMAs as well as two declining ones. Calgary was Canada's fastest growing CMA, showing an increase of 16.5% during five years. Chicoutimi-

Jonquière was the slowest growing (1.8%) while the populations of Windsor and Sudbury CMAs actually declined by 0.5% and 0.4%, respectively. This is the first time that a population decline has been recorded in the history of Canada's metropolitan areas. Is this the beginning of a real trend? Or does it reflect the temporary difficulties of the automobile and mining industries in those areas?



Chart 6

### Percentage Change of Population by CMA, 1971-1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6

One consequence of different growth rates is the change in the rank of metropolitan areas. For example, in 1971 Montréal was the largest CMA in Canada, ahead of Toronto by 127,113 persons. But by 1976 Toronto had an additional

201,003 persons compared to Montréal's increase of 73,274. Hence Toronto is 1976's largest CMA, greater than Montréal by 616 persons. Ottawa-Hull, Calgary and Edmonton may well join the ranks of the million-population CMAs by 2001.

### Canada's central cities are shrinking

Although almost every metropolitan area increased its population between 1971 and 1976, nine of them recorded declines in their central cities. Montréal showed the greatest

loss with 133,806 persons; next came Toronto with a decline of 79,468 persons; and third was Vancouver with a population decrease of 16,110 persons.

Table 4

## Population Change of Nine Central Cities, 1971-1976

Central city	Numerical change	Percentage change
Montréal	-133,806	-11.0
Toronto	-79,468	-11.1
Vancouver	-16,110	-3.8
Québec	-10,751	-5.7
Windsor	-6,774	-3.3
Halifax	-4,153	-3.4
Saint John	-3,083	-3.5
Sudbury	-2,842	-2.8
St. John's	-1,838	-2.1

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6.

With the exception of Calgary, Chicoutimi-Jonquière, Oshawa and St. Catharines, the population gains for all other central cities were surprisingly small when compared to the

remainder and fringe components. The city of Victoria, for example, increased by 1.3%, the remaining part of the urbanized core by 12.0% and the fringe by 35.9%.

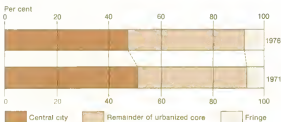
But remainder and fringe components are growing

The general trend of moving away from the central city can be highlighted by comparing the population for the city, remainder of the urbanized core and fringe areas for all CMAs in 1971 and 1976. The overall figures show a percentage decline in the central city populations but increases in the remainder of the urbanized core and fringe areas. This pattern has also been observed in many of the central cities of the United States. Are the largest cities dying? Will they become deserted and empty at weekends and inhabited only

by a commuting workforce during the week? Has the high cost of land in the centre of the largest cities made it uneconomical to use for housing? It could be that the decline of the population in the central city may simply reflect a shift from using land and buildings, in the central city, for residential purposes to using the land for business and commercial purposes. Increasing fuel costs and growing traffic problems, however, may reverse this trend and make living in the city more attractive in the future.

Chart 7

Average Percentage Change of Population  
Within all CMAs, 1971-1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6

Land size ...

Ottawa-Hull CMA is Canada's largest in terms of land area, covering almost 4,000 square kilometres. Saskatoon CMA is at the other end of the scale with just over 100 square kilometres. The CMAs can be grouped into four land area sizes: eight CMAs are under

1,000 square kilometres; five are between 1,000 and 2,000 square kilometres; seven are in the 2,000 to 3,000 range; and three CMAs are above 3,700 square kilometres. The average land size of the 23 CMAs was 1,758.8 square kilometres in 1976.

... and population density

Saskatoon is the smallest CMA in land area and it has the highest population density among the CMAs with over 1,300 persons per square kilometre. Saskatoon is closely

followed by Calgary with 1,122 people per square kilometre. Sudbury and Thunder Bay have the lowest with 66.0 and 58.7 persons per square kilometre, respectively.

Montréal ... almost 7,000 persons per square kilometre

The population densities of the central cities of the metropolitan areas, however, show different patterns. Montréal and Toronto are by far the most densely populated: 6,838.9 and 6,522.3 persons per square

kilometre, while Vancouver has a population density of 3,623.6 persons per square kilometre. The least densely populated city is Saint John — only 266.4 persons per square kilometre.

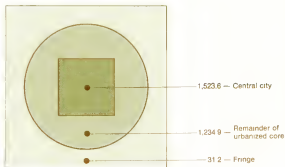
Overcrowded cities?

The population density decreases as we move away from the central city. This is true for most metropolitan areas and is illustrated by the overall averages: from 1,523.6 persons per

square kilometre in the central city, the population density decreases to 1,234.9 persons in the remainder of the urbanized core and to 31.2 persons in the fringe areas.

Chart 8

Average Population Density in Square Kilometres Within all CMAs, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6

Are Canada's largest cities overcrowded? Is the population decline in our cities a consequence of overcrowding? It could be that more and more people are preferring the less crowded environment of

the remainder and fringe areas. This move has been stimulated in recent years, by more jobs being created close to the suburban fringe areas than in central cities.

Table 5

Population Density Per Square Kilometre for Six Selected CMAs, 1976

	Largest city	Remainder	Fringe
Montréal	6,838.9	1,650.4	100.1
Toronto	6,522.3	1,939.9	47.9
Vancouver	3,623.6	937.5	66.7
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	391.7	904.8	14.9
Oshawa	745.8	459.2	35.1
Saint John	266.4	301.3	19.8
Average for all CMAs	1,523.6	1,234.9	31.2

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6

# Metropolitan Profiles



## Young and old CMAs

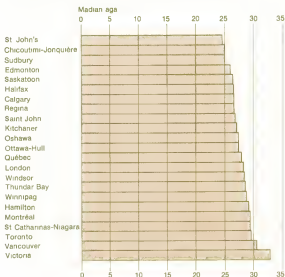
Using the median age of the population for Canada as a whole (27.8 years in 1976), we can separate the CMAs into "youthful" and "aged" categories. Twelve of the CMAs may be considered as "youthful" because their median ages are below that for Canada. Québec City has the same median age as for Canada. The remaining 10 have higher median ages and may be classed as "aged". St. John's, Newfoundland is the youngest of the CMAs, according to this criterion, with a median age for its population

of only 24.6 years. St. John's has the highest proportion of children 0-14 years (29.5%) and a relatively small proportion of persons 65 and over (7.0%).

Victoria CMA is the most "aged" of the CMAs. In 1976, the median age of the population was 32.9 years, that is, five years above Canada's median age. The share of children (0-14 years) was 19.7% and the proportion of elderly was 15.5%. The corresponding figures for Canada were 25.6% and 8.7% respectively.

Chart 9

CMA Population Distribution by Median Age, 1976



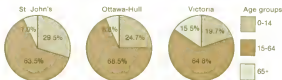
Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 14

Between the young and elderly is the adult population of 15-64 years. This group includes college and university students, men and women of prime marriageable age and most importantly, people of working age. Fifteen CMAs have proportions of adults above the national average of

65.6%. Included in this group are: Montréal (68.9%), Québec (68.8%), Ottawa-Hull (66.5%), Calgary (68.0%) and Vancouver (67.8%). Among those with relatively low proportions of adults we find: Saint John (53.3%), St. John's (53.5%) and Windsor (64.1%).

Chart 10

Percentage Distribution of the Population by Three Selected Age Groups for Three CMAs, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 14

## Metropolitan areas by marital status

The marital status of the metropolitan population 15 years of age and over in 1976 was: 2.7 million single (never married) persons; 6.2 million married (includes separated); 596,000 widowed; and 209,000 divorced

Among the CMAs there are also variations in the distribution of the population by marital status. Québec has the

highest proportion (34.1%) of single persons among the CMAs; Oshawa the most married people (69.3%); Victoria the largest proportion of widows (8.7%); and Calgary the greatest proportion of divorced persons (3.5%). The comparable figures for the total CMA population are: single, 28.2%; married, 63.5%; widowed, 6.1% and divorced, 2.2%.

Table 6

Percentage Distribution of Population  
15 Years and Over by Marital Status for  
Eight Selected CMAs, 1976

	Single (never married)	Married (includes separated)	Widowed	Divorced
Toronto	27.3	64.5	6.1	2.1
Montréal	29.5	62.7	6.0	1.8
Vancouver	27.1	62.5	7.1	3.3
Ottawa-Hull	30.0	62.6	5.5	1.8
Edmonton	29.3	62.7	4.9	3.0
Québec	34.1	59.4	5.3	1.3
Victoria	24.8	63.4	8.7	3.1
Oshawa	23.5	69.3	5.4	1.7
All CMAs	28.2	63.5	6.1	2.2

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-809, Table 11.

### Families and children

Of the 3.2 million families in metropolitan Canada in 1976, 89.5% were husband-wife families and 10.5% were lone-parent families. The three CMAs with the lowest proportion of husband-wife families were Saint John (88.6%), Winnipeg (88.9%) and Montréal (88.9%). Conversely these CMAs had the highest proportions of lone-parent families. In contrast, 91.3% of Kitchener families were husband-wife type. Lone-parent families have been increasing in recent years, particularly those in which a woman

is the lone parent. Which CMAs will have the highest proportion of lone-parent families in 1981?

The average number of children per family in 1976 ranged from a high of 1.9 in Chicoutimi-Jonquière and St. John's to a low of 1.2 in Victoria. The larger metropolitan areas, in general, had fewer children per family than the smaller ones.

### Private households and dwellings

In 1976, there were 4,179,845 private households in Canada's metropolitan areas. Private households consist of persons (other than foreign residents) who occupy private

dwellings in the specified metropolitan areas and who do not have a usual place of residence in a non-metropolitan area.

### Most Montréal households occupy apartments

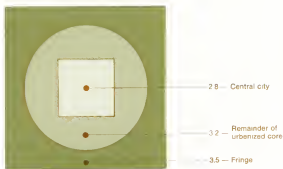
Statistics Canada sets out five types of private dwellings occupied by households: single-detached, apartment, duplex and movable (for example, mobile homes). Among CMAs, Thunder Bay has the largest proportion of private households (70.4%) occupying single-detached dwellings; St. John's

the greatest proportion occupying single-attached dwellings (17.7%); Montréal the highest in apartments (65.3%); Chicoutimi-Jonquière, the largest in duplexes (21.3%); and lastly, Saint John with the highest proportion of households occupying movable dwellings (4.8%).



Chart 11

Average Number of Persons Per Household Within all CMAs, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 93-805, Tables 18 and 19

Although the number of persons per square kilometre increases as we move towards the central city, the opposite is true for average number of persons per household. Larger household size for the areas outside the central city suggests that many couples may move

away from the central city to raise their families. High housing costs, lack of space, privacy and better schools are important considerations for a young couple with children. In addition, highways make commuting practical for many people.

## English and French mother tongue ...

English and French are Canada's two official languages. The mother tongue (the language first learned and still understood) for over 60% of the metropolitan population was English. French was the mother tongue for 23.0%. Among the metropolitan areas English is the mother tongue for 97.5% of St. John's population, mak-

ing it the highest proportion for all CMAs. Closely following St. John's are Halifax, 93.3%, Saint John, 90.1% and Victoria, 89.4%. Chicoutimi-Jonquière's dominant language is French (96.2%) but English is the least common (1.8%). French is also dominant in Québec City, 94.8% and Montréal, 65.3%.

Table 7

Percentage Distribution of Households by Private  
Occupied Dwellings for Eight Selected CMAs, 1976

	Single- detached	Single- attached	Apartment	Duplex	Movable	Total
Toronto	39.7	16.3	41.8	2.1	0.1	100.0
Montréal	24.1	6.3	65.3	4.0	0.3	100.0
Ottawa-Hull	41.8	15.8	35.7	6.0	0.7	100.0
Halifax	48.1	8.8	31.0	7.9	4.2	100.0
St. John's	50.2	17.7	12.5	17.9	1.7	100.0
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	47.8	6.9	22.2	21.3	1.8	100.0
Thunder Bay	70.4	5.6	16.4	6.8	0.8	100.0
Saint John	43.4	5.5	32.6	13.7	4.8	100.0

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-809, Table 11.

Owned versus  
rented dwellings

How many private households contain owner-occupants in Metropolitan Canada? With the exception of Montréal and Québec, more than 50% of private households in each CMA have owner-occupants: the proportion for all metropolitan areas was 53.8% in 1976. Owner-occupants ranged from a low of 38.2% in Montréal to a high of 72.2% in St. Catharines. Two CMAs had 72.0% or more of their private households containing owner-occupants,

12 with more than 60% and the remaining nine were in the 50% to 60% range.

The majority (61.8%) of private households in Montréal rent their dwellings. Québec is the only other CMA with such a high concentration of renters (53.8%). Dwellings are generally rented by the younger age groups, especially those under 25, many of whom cannot afford to purchase their own houses.

Household size  
within CMAs

In general, household size is smaller in the central city and larger in the remaining parts of the metropolitan area. Montréal, for example, has an average of 2.6 persons per household living in the central city, 3.2 in the remainder of the urbanized core and 3.6 persons per household in the fringe area. The comparative figures for Toronto were 2.7, 3.1 and

3.5 persons per household. This pattern of distribution within CMAs is clearly shown for the average number of persons for all CMAs: for the central city it was 2.8 persons per household; for the remainder of the urbanized core the figure was 3.2 and for the fringe area the number increased to 3.5 persons per household.

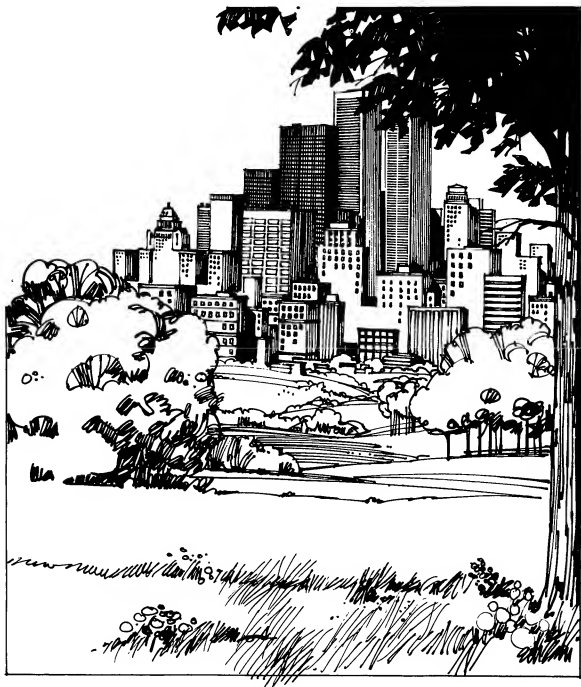
... Italian, German,  
Ukrainian and  
many others

For the metropolitan population as a whole, the 1976 Census shows that there are a variety of languages, apart from English and French, first learned and still understood: Italian, 3.4%; German, 2.0%; and Ukrainian, 1.3%. The mother tongue for the remaining 9.7% of the population includes: Portuguese, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, Greek and many more. These languages

are also more important in some CMAs than others. German mother tongue was relatively high in Kitchener and Regina (6.5% and 5.9% respectively). The proportion of the population with Italian mother tongue was highest in Toronto (7.2%) and the proportion of the population with Ukrainian mother tongue was greatest in Winnipeg (5.5%).



# Urban Prospects



## Urban plateau?

This century has witnessed Canada's rapid rise from a rural country to one of the most highly urbanized countries in the world. But the slight decline in the proportion of the urban population from 76.1% to 75.5% between 1971 and 1976 suggests that we may have reached a plateau, while the increase in the rural population during those years could mean that there is a revived interest in rural living. Already in the United States people are mov-

ing out of some central cities at a faster rate than those moving in from the country. Whether or not Canada will follow this possible "back to the land" trend remains to be seen. If it does, rural communities might benefit from a rural renaissance, their tax base could be increased, local facilities improved and commercial trade enlarged. The rural-urban trend, however, is likely to become clearer following the results of the 1981 Census.

## City centre revival

Meanwhile, what future awaits those declining central cities? They could face problems of obsolescence most notable in the downtown cores; vacant and derelict housing, underused schools, outmoded public facilities and an aging inventory of stores, offices and factories. To combat these possibilities interest in our cities has been revived, small communities are being developed within the city centre, local shopping centres are being patronized and community programmes for children and elderly persons are being provided. Some provinces have financial aid schemes to help neighbourhood improvement and the residential rehabilitation of city centres. Further, the expectation of rising fuel costs may encourage more people to move to the central parts of the city.

Although some of our larger cities are experiencing a population decline, there is no indication of a massive move to the countryside. What is happening is that the city and country boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred. People are moving from the central cities to smaller centres and to the periphery. Many Canadians may be seeking to improve the quality of their life by moving away from the high density living of central cities.

The overwhelming majority of Canadians still call our cities and towns home, but we need to have a greater understanding of future prospects and be able to develop a strategy of actions to control the environment of our cities.

Canada has taken a census of population every 10 years from 1851 and every five years from 1956. The last census was taken on June 1, 1976. The census data constitute the most important single source of information on the population of Canada by many geographic areas from the national and provincial levels down to smaller groups such as cities, towns and municipalities. These data include: information on the number of people who live in Canada; their characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, language, educational level and occupation; number and types of families; and types of dwellings. Census information is used for a variety of purposes by private individuals, governments at all levels, educational institutions, business people and other organizations.

As part of a programme to supplement 1976 Census statistical reports, a special series of popular studies has been

undertaken on selected topics of public interest. Each study is a description of major trends and patterns. The data used are from the 1976 Census and other relevant sources. This series is deliberately non-technical and is designed for use at the high school and community college/university levels. However, it could also be of interest to the general public and other groups, such as public libraries, media, politicians, community and neighbourhood groups, marketing people and educational publishers.

**Canada's Cities** is the fifth and final study in this series. It provides an outline of urban growth, the size, distribution and changes in metropolitan areas and a profile of the metropolitan population.

Produced by the Social Statistics Field and the Information Division of Statistics Canada.

Many persons contributed to the production of this series. Edward Pryor was the originator of the project. It was carried out under the direction of Anatole Romaniuc, project manager and M. V. George, project leader.

The manuscript for this study was prepared in the Social Statistics Field by Leeroy Murray with professional help from Françoise Ricour-Singh. A number of professionals from the Field made a valuable contribution in reviewing the manuscript and Jim Power coordinated the design and art work.

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